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THE LADY OF THE HEAVENS.

Amid such scenes as these they passed through the town of Umgugundh-lovu into which Rachel had been brought in order that the people might see that their Ihkosazana had returned, and on to that krasi upon the hili, where she had spent all those weary weeks until Richard came. She reached it as the sun was setting, and although she did not seem to know any of them was received with joy and adoration by the women who had been her attendants. Here she slept that

of them was received with joy and adoration by the women who had been her attendants. Here she slept that night, for they thought that she must be too weary to see the King at once; moreover, he desired first to receive the reporth of Tamboosa and the captains, and to learn all that had happened in this strange business.

Next morning, whilst Rachel sat by the pool in which once she had seen the vision of Richard, Tamboosa and an escort came to bring her to Dingaan. When they told her this, she said neither yea nor nay, but, refusing to enter a litter they had brought, walked at the head of them back to the Great Place, and, watched by thousands, through the locust-strewn streets to the Intunkulu, the House of the King. Here, in front of his hut, and surpounded by his Council, sat Dingean and the indunas who rose to greet her with the royal salute. She advanced towards them slowly, looking more beautiful than ever she had done, but with wild, wandering eyes. They set a stool for her, and she sat down on the stool, staring at the ground.

advanced towards them slowly, looking more beautiful than ever she had done, but with wild, wandering eyes. They set a stool for her, and she sat down on the stool, staring at the ground. Then as she said nothing, Dingaan, who seemed very sad and full of fear, commanded Tamboosa to report all that had happened in the ears of the Council, and he took up his tale.

He told of the journey to the Tugela, and of how the Inkosazana and the white lord, Dario, had crossed the river alone but a few hours after "O, King," answered the fat man, river alone but a few hours after

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and of how the Inkosazana and the white lord, Dario, had crossed the white lord, Dario, had crossed the river alone but a few hours after Ibubesi, ordering him to follow next day, also alone, with the white ox that Javalled myself of my and done so, and on reaching Ramah had found the white Umfundusi and his wife lying dead in their room, and so the following of the Earth! Eater up of the case of the Earth! Eater up of Enemies!" said Movo, "thou thyself dead, and in the garden of the houses, also dead, and in the garden of the house a man of the people of Bubesi, dying, who, with his last breath narrated to him the story of the taking of the Incompany of the Incompany of the taking of the Incompany of

sent by the herd boy to Ibubesi and his people. Lastly he told all the rest of that story, of how he had come back to Zululand "as though he had wings." and finding the regiment that had escorted the Inkosazana still in camp near the river, had returned with them to attack Mafooti, which they discovered to be deserted by its people.

While he described how by the flare of the lightning they saw the Inkosazana standing on the roof of a hut, how they captured the wild beast. Ibubesi, how they learned that the Spirit of Inkosazana was "wandering." and the dreadful words she said, the burning of Mafooti, and the fearful death of Ibubesi by fire, all the Council listened in utter silence. Then they listened also whilst he showed how evil after evil had fallen upon the regiment, evil by fire and water and sickness, as evil had fallen upon the land also by the plague of locusts.

At length Tamboosa's story was finished, and certain men were brought forward bound, who had been the captains of the band that went with Ishmael, among them those who had killed, or caused to die, the white teacher and his wife.

Upon the stern command of the King

zana had been driven away, and her curse laid upon the land, where al-ready it was at work. Then he com-manded that they should be led thence, all of them, and put to a ter-

Mafooti, who should, he said, have been destroyed, every one.

At his words executioners rushed in to seize these wretched men, and then it was that Rachel, who all this while had sat as though she heard nothing, lifted her head and spoke for the first

iffred her head and spottines.

"Set them free, set them free!" she commanded. "Vengeance is from Heaven, and Heaven will pour it out in plenty. Not on my hands, not on my hands shail be the blood of those who sent the Spirit of the Inkosazana to wander in the skies. Who was it that bade an impi run to Ramah, and what alld they there in the house of that bade an impi run to Ramah, and what did they there in the house of those who gave me birth? When the Master calls, the dogs must search and kill. Set them free, lest there be more blood between the Inkosazana and her people of the Zulus."

When he heard these words, spoken in a strange, wailing voice, Dingaan trembled, for he knew that it was he who had bidden his dogs to run.

trembled, for he knew that it was he who had bidden his dogs to run.

"Let them go," he said, "and let the land see them no mome forever."

So those men went thankfully enough, and the land saw them no more. As they passed the gate other men entered, starved and hungry-looking men, whose bones almost pierced their skins, and who carried in their hands remnants of shields that looked as though they had been gnawed by rats. They saluted the King ed by rats. They saluted the King with feeble vo'ces, and squatted down upon the ground. "Who are those skeletons," he asked

angrily, "who dare to break in upon my Council?" "King." answered their spokesman, "we are captains of the Nobambe, the

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Nodwenge, and the Isangu regiments whom thou didst send to destroy the

what is it. Movo, Reeper of the kine," he asked anxiously, "that you break in on me thus at my Council?"

"O, King," answered the fat man, "pardon me, but, O King, my tidings are so sad that I availed myself of my

and struck the man so sharply with the shaft of the spear he held that it

the shaft of the spear he held that it broke upon his head.

"Fat fool that you are." he excla'med. "What have you done to my cattle? Speak, or you shall be slain for an evil-doer who has bewitched them."

"Is it a crime to be fat. O King." answered the indignant Movo, rubbing his skull, "when others are so much fatter?" and he looked reproachfully at Dingaan's enormous person. "Can I

king the sum of the roof of a hut, how they captured the wild beast, Ibubesi, how they learned that the Spirit of Inkosazana was "wandering," and the dreadful words she said, the burning of Mafooti, and the fearful death of Ibubesi by fire, all the Council listened in utter silence. Then they listened also whilst he showed how evil after evil had fallen upon the regiment, evil by fire and water and siekness, as evil had fallen upon the land also by the plague of locusts.

At length Tamboosas's story was finished, and certain men were brought forward bound, who had been the captains of the band that went with Ishmael, among them those who had killed, or caused to die, the white teacher and his wife.

Upon the stern command of the King these men also told their story, saying that they had not meant to kill they were ordered to obey in all things but who, as they now understood, hid dared to lay a plot to capture the Inkosazana for himself. When they had finished the ising rose and poured out his wrath on them, because through their deeds the Spirit of the Inkosazana had been driven away, and her curse laid upon the land, where al-

vengeance on the corn, vengeance on the kine, vengeance on the whole land, because blood runs between the spirit of the Inkosazana and the race of the Ama-zulu, whom once she loved."

"It is true, it is true, White One, but why dost thou say it so offen?" gran

rible death, and with them those eaptains of the regiment who had spoken against the following of the people of Mafooti, who should, he said, have been destroyed, every one.

done?"
"Note quite, O King," answered the melancholy Movo, still rubbing his head. "The cattle of all the kraals around are dying of this same sickness, and the crops are quite eaten, so that next winter everyone must perish of famine."

"Is that all, O Movo?"
"Not quite, O King, since messengers have come to me, as head keeper of the kine, to say that all the other royal herds within two days' journey are also stricken, although if I understand them right, of some other pest. Also,

which I forgot to add—"
"Hunt out this bearer of ill tidings,"
roared Dingaan, "hunt him out, and
send orders that his own cattle be
taken to fill up the holes in my blanket."

Now some attendants sprang on the Now some attendants sprang on the luckless Movo and began to beat him with their sticks. Still, before he reached the gates he succeeded in turning round weeping in good earnest

"It is quite useless, O King, all my cattle are dead, too. They will find nothing but the horns and the hoofs, for I have sold the hides to the shieldand shouted:

Then they thrust him forth Then they thrust him forth.
He was gone, and for a while there was silence, for despair filled the hear's of the King and his Councillors, as they gazed at Rachel dismayed, wondering within themselves how they might be rid of her and of the evils which she had brought men them bewhich she had brought upon them be

cause of the blood of her people which lay at their doors.

Whilst they still stared thus in sil-ence yet another messenger came run-ning through the gate like one in great

"Now I am minded to order this fellow to be killed before he opens his mouth," said Dingaan, "for of a surety he also is a bearer of ill-tidings.

"Nay, O King," cried out the man in alarm, "my news is only that an embassy waits without."

"From whom?" asked Dingaan anxiously. "The white Amaboona?"

"Nay, O King, from the queen of the Ghost people to whom thou didst despatch Noie, daughter of Seyapi, a while ago." "Now I am minded to order this fel-

while ago.

Hearing the name Noie, Rachel lifted her head, and for the first time her face grew human. "I remember," said Dingaan. "Ad-

Trememoer, sale Dingam. Admit the embassy."

Then followed a long pause. At length the gate opened and through it appeared Noie herself, clad in a garb of spotless white and somewhat travelafter these a bodyguard of fifty sol-diers of a like stature. This strang-and barbarous-looking company ad-vanced slowly, whilst the Council vanced slowly, whilst the Council stared at them wondering for never before had they seen people so huge, and arriving in front of the King set down the litters, staring back in an-

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wer with their great round eyes.

As they came Rachel rose from As they came Rachel rose Holl stool and turned slowly so that she and Noie, who walked in front of the and Noie, who walked in face. For a embassy, stood face to face. For a moment they gaved at each other, then Noie, running forward, knelt before Rachel and kissed the hem of her robe, but Rachel bent down and lifted her up in her strong arms, embracing her

as a mother embraces a child.

"Where hast thou been, Sister?" she asked. "I have sought thee long."

"Surely on thy business, Zoola," answered Noie, scanning her curiously.

"Dost thou not remember?"

"Nay I remember naught Noie save "Nay, I remember naught, Noie, save that I have sought thee long. My spirit wanders, Noie."

"Lady," she said, "my people told me that it was so. They told me many terrible things, they who can see afar, they for whom distance has no gates, but I did not believe them. Now I see with my own eyes. Be at Now I see with my own eyes. Be at peace, Lady, my people will give thee back thy Spirit, though perchance thou must travel to find it, for in their land all spirits dwell. Be at peace and listen."

"With thee, Noie, I am at peace," replied Rachel, and still holding her hand, she reseated herself upon the

stool.
"Where are the messengers?" asked

"I see none." "King." answered Noie, "they shall Then she made signs to the escort of

giants, some of whom came forward and drew the curtains of the litters, whilst others opened huge umbrellas of split cane which they carried in their hands.

"Now what weapons are these?" asked Dingaan. "Daughter of Seyapi, you know that none may appear before the King armed."
"Weapons against the sun, O King,

"Weapons against the sun, O king, which my people hate."
"And who are the wizards that hate the sun?" queried Dingaan again in an astonished voice. Then he was silent for out of the first litter came a little man, pale as the shoot from a bulb that has grown in darkness, with large soft a year like the eyes of an large, soft eyes like the eyes of an owl, that blinked in the light, and long hair out of which all the colour seem-ed to have faded.

As the man, who, like Noie, was dressed in a white robe, and in size measured no more than a twelve-year measured no more than a tweive-year old child, set his sandailed feet upon the ground, one of the huge guards sprang forward to shield him with the umbrella, but being awkward, struck his leg against the pole of the litter and stumbled against him, nearly knocking him to the ground, and in his efforts to save himself, letting fall the umbrella. The little man turned on him furiously, and holding one hand above his head as though to shield himself from the snu, with the other pointed at him, speaking in a low sybillant voice that sounded like the hiss of a snake. Thereon the guard fell to his knees, and bending down with outstretched arms, beat his forehead on the earth as though in prayer head on the earth as though in praye for mercy. The sight of this making supplication to one wh could have killed with a blow, was so strange that Dingaan, unable to re-strain his curiosity, asked Noie if the dwarf was ordering the other to be

"Nay, King," answered Noie, "for blood is hateful to these people. He is saying that the soldier has offended many times. Therefore he curses him and tells him that he shall wither like a plucked leaf and die without seeing his home again."

a plucked leaf and die without seems his home again."

"And will he die?" asked Dingaan.

"Certainly, King; those upon whom the Ghost-people lay that curse must obey the curse. Moreover, this man deserves his doom, for on the journey he killed another to take his food."

"Of a truth a terrible people!" said Dingaan uneasily. "Bid them lay no

Dingaan uneasily. "Bid them lay no curse on me lest they should see more blood than they wish for."

"It is foolish to threaten the Great Ones of the Ghost-folk, King, for they hear even what they seem not to understand," answered Noie quietly.

"Wow!" exclaimed the King, "let my words be forgotten. I am sorry that I troubled them to come so far to visit me." (To be Continued.)

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